

THE
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NEW YORK SYSTEM OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

A RECENT visit to the city of Albany, the seat of government for the State of New York, during the session of the Legislature, has afforded us a gratifying opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the details of the system of Public Instruction in that great State. We cannot doubt that the friends of Education, in this Commonwealth, will be interested in learning what has been done and is now doing for the welfare of the rising generation, in a neighboring and a kindred community. We shall, therefore, proceed to give some account of what has been done for Common Schools in the Empire State.

The Common School system of New York is of recent origin. Unlike that of Massachusetts, it was not incorporated into its earliest institutions, and has not descended to the present day, as a constituent part of its civil polity. It was established so late as 1812. Owing to this fact, it is worthy of remark, that the people of that State have enjoyed one great advantage over the people of Massachusetts. They have been exempted from the immense labor of forever boasting of their ancestors, and have had more time to devote to their posterity. A large majority of the generation now upon the stage, never possessed the benefits of a free system of Public Instruction. But the generation which is now passing the line, that separates minority from adult age, has come up through the schoolhouse. From an examination of their statute book, it is apparent, that, within the last few years, a new spirit, upon this subject, has animated and guided their legislative proceedings. They now have the grand outlines of a system, which, considering the newness of its existence, is without a parallel in the history of the world, for the comprehensiveness of its plan and the munificence of its endowments.

The system in New York is not wholly a system of *Free Schools*. The common district schools are supported, *in part*, as private schools are supported in Massachusetts; that is, by those who send to the school, and according to the amount of attendance. There are four sources, from which funds are derived for the support of Common Schools. 1st. The State, from its ample funds, distributes a certain sum to be divided amongst the districts, according to the number of children belonging to each, between the ages of five and sixteen years. 2nd. The Supervisors of the several counties, (officers whose duties are, in some respects, analogous to those of our County Commissioners,) are required by law to levy a tax upon each town, *equal* to its distributive share of the State's appropriation. 3d. Each town is authorized, though not required, to raise, by taxation upon its inhabitants, a sum equal to both the preceding sums. In this respect the power of the towns in New York differs from that of the towns in Massachusetts. In the latter, every town may raise as much money as it pleases for the support of schools. In New York, the towns have no authority to raise more by taxation than the amount of the two sums before mentioned; viz., what is received from the State, and what is levied, by the County Supervisors, upon

the towns. 4th. As the funds derived from these three sources are not sufficient to maintain a school so long as is generally desired by the districts, a further sum is raised by a direct tax, which is levied by each district upon the parents, masters and guardians of the children, who attend the school, just according to the number of the days of their attendance. This last provision constitutes the point of resemblance between their public and our private schools. In order to entitle any district to receive its share of public moneys from the State, it must have maintained a school, kept by a qualified teacher, at least four months of the preceding year. The average length of the schools in New-York, in the year 1837, was a little more than seven months and a half. The average length of the schools in Massachusetts, during the same year, was less than seven months.

It possibly may be because we have an unconscious bias in favor of our own institutions, but we cannot but think, that our system of schools, wholly free—always open to all the children in the district—possesses a decided superiority over one, where each parent is obliged to contribute a part for the expenses of the school, according to the number of days his children have attended. After our towns have voted the school money, the benefits of the school are the equal property of all. There is no additional burden upon constant attendance; there is no pecuniary motive for a single absence. It costs no parent, master or guardian a cent more to send all his children, all the time, than to send a part of them a part of the time, or to detain them all from school during its whole continuance. In very many families, especially where the parents have no adequate appreciation of the value of learning, and where, of course, the children have not been inspired with the love of it, there are a hundred frivolous and *unnameable* pretences for desertion from the school. Often, the supposed reasons, for and against attendance, come so near balancing each other, that the weight of the lightest motive, thrown into either side, will turn the scale. The question may present itself to the mind in the form of an expense, if the child goes to school; or in the form of a saving, if he stays at home. The motive may assume the aspect of economy. The cost is immediate and certain; the advantages, it may be thought, are remote and uncertain; and we all know, that a small motive, near by, is more efficient with most minds, than a great one, if remote. As has been said by some one, a straw near the eye seems as large as an oak of a hundred years in the distance. In order to see how a small pecuniary motive will turn men aside from the course they would otherwise pursue, let a man station himself at the fork of two roads, one of which, though nearer and better, levies a light toll, while the other, though poorer and more circuitous, is free, and note how many people, as they arrive at the point of divergence, without saying a word, but merely from having, at that time, a mental conception of a fourpence, will glide into the rougher and longer free road, rather than take the shorter and easier toll one. Now, when each half day's attendance of each child costs something, a similar question will be presented to the minds of many of those who have the care of children. It seems not in conformity with human experience, in other matters, to suppose, that such questions will be decided by all minds without reference to the expense. If the interest of *parents* in the welfare of their children is a counterpoise against this pecuniary bias, it by no means follows, that such would be the case with masters and guardians, in reference to apprentices and wards. From the time of the American Revolution, the most terrible of terrors to an American has been a tax-bill; and a man who spends dollars every week to gratify his pride or to indulge his appetites, if a tax is presented for the education of his children, will cry out, as Macbeth did to the ghost of Banquo, "Take any shape but that." We are aware that those, whose duty it is to levy the tax above mentioned, for the attendance of the children, are empowered to remit it, in case they adjudge any inhabitant of the district unable

to pay. But this consideration does not touch the case of those who are able to pay and can have no hope of being exonerated from the tax. This class of persons will not be deterred from concealing acts of penuriousness under the guise of economy; for economy is so noble and excellent a virtue, that misers always call upon it to do their niggardly work. It is a consideration of more weight, that no one can enjoy his portion of the public money, without his own contribution; but, on the whole, we should deprecate this close and daily association of the money-saving motive with the cause of Education.

In regard to a system of means, specifically designed to qualify teachers for Common Schools, the State of New York made earlier movements than any other State on this side of the Atlantic. Three years ago, a Teachers' Department was engrafted upon one Academy in each senatorial district. There are eight of these districts. The sum of \$500 was given to each of these Academies for the purchase of apparatus and a library; and also the further sum of \$400, which, together with the fees received for tuition, it was supposed would be sufficient to pay the salary of an instructor. By an act of last April, the sum of \$40,000 is hereafter to be distributed among the Academies in the State, and each Academy, which receives as much as \$700 for its annual share, is required to open a Teachers' Department. By this, the number of Academies, sustaining such a department, will be materially increased. The regular course of study occupies three years; the object being, rather to prepare a small number of teachers, thoroughly, than to send out a large number with indifferent qualifications. The academical year, however, consists of two terms only, of four months each. A long vacation occurs in the winter, which allows the pupils to keep school. The amount earned helps to defray the expenses of attending the Academy; and it furnishes an opportunity to apply to practice the knowledge previously acquired. Belonging to these departments, there were, in 1835—the year in which they were established—108 pupils; in 1836, 218; in 1837, 284; in 1838, 374. All the Academies make the most favorable reports in regard to the success of the scheme. The pupils are in great demand. The applications far exceed the power of supply. The amount of compensation received is much in advance of the average rate in the vicinity; showing that the reluctance on the part of districts to pay increased salaries arises, in part at least, from a conviction that they are accustomed to pay as much as is earned; and that, whenever qualifications rise to a higher point, compensation will soon follow. The inadequacy of the number of teachers, now in the process of qualification, to the wants of the State, will be perceived, when it is stated, that there were, at the time when the last reports were made, only 384 in the departments, while there are, in the State, more than 10,000 organized school districts.

It will be perceived from the above account, that the New York plan, for the qualification of teachers, differs widely, in one important particular, from the one projected and now about to be carried into execution in this State. An outline of the latter is contained in the *third* number of this Journal. The course of studies prescribed for the two, is not materially different. The time to be occupied in completing a course of study may be a little longer or a little shorter in Massachusetts than in New-York, at the option of the pupil. So far as the plan is concerned, the striking point of dissimilarity is, that in New York, the Teachers' Department is engrafted upon an Academy;—it is not the principal, but an incidental object of the institution;—it is not primary, but secondary;—it does not command the entire and undivided attention of the instructors, but shares that attention with the general objects for which the Academy was founded; it may fail and the Academy still survive. In Massachusetts, the business of the Normal School is to possess the entire and exclusive occupancy of the whole ground; to engross the whole attention of all the instructors and all the pupils;

to have no rival of any kind, no incidental or collateral purposes, and the very existence of the school will be staked upon its success. In comparing the relative merits of the two plans, although it may not become us to express an opinion that the one adopted in the State of New York is not the best for that State, or, at any rate, that it was not the best at the time it was adopted, (for it is to be remembered, that almost all the information, possessed by the community at large, on this subject, has been acquired within the last three years,) yet we feel confident, that the plan adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education, so far, at least, as this State is concerned, has a decided superiority. The course of studies, commonly pursued at the institutions which are worthy to be called Academies,—that is, at seminaries, which occupy a middle ground between Common Schools and Colleges,—consists rather in an extension of knowledge into the higher departments of science, than in reviewing and thoroughly and critically mastering the rudiments or elementary branches of knowledge. Yet the latter is the first business of the Normal pupil. Is the Normal instructor or the Normal class as likely to concentrate the whole of effort and attention upon the sounds of letters, the spelling of words, punctuation, and the niceties of prosody and grammar, in the midst of classes far more numerous than their own, who are studying the classics for college or the mathematics for engineering? Few intellectual operations are more dissimilar than those of acquiring and imparting. The art of imparting is one main portion of the Normal pupil's qualification; while acquisition, as our Academies are generally conducted, is the main object of the Academical student. At any rate, the latter is endeavoring to acquire the power of acting upon men, or upon matter;—of becoming acquainted with civil institutions or with physical laws and agencies; while the main purpose of the former is that of influencing and training the plastic minds of children,—employments, which require the activity of different sets of faculties. How far it may be assumed, that the two classes,—viz., the students, who attend an Academy to prepare themselves for entering the University or for higher and more lucrative departments of business, and those who resort to it to become qualified for keeping district schools,—belong to different walks of life, as it regards the outward advantages of fortune or circumstance, we are, perhaps, not qualified to judge; and, therefore, we shall not venture to specify or predict the probable social consequences of bringing different classes of young people together, not to be united by the moral tie of pursuing the same objects, but while they are *physically* together to be *morally* separated through a divergence of their pursuits;—there being, at the same time, a sufficient number in each party to create the spirit of clanship and hence to establish practical relations, founded upon the dissocial sentiments of our nature.—Such an unfriendly relation, however, though not the subject of definite calculation, and wholly unjustifiable, wherever it exists, is not to be omitted in an estimate of possible consequences. On the whole, the pursuits and the objects of a common academical class are so different from those of a Normal one, that it would seem to us, that the two can be far more successfully prosecuted separately than together. A harmony among the objects pursued and a concentration of the efforts which are made, must greatly subserve both thoroughness and advancement. The State of New York, however, is not pledged to her present system for the qualification of teachers. She can abandon it and establish Normal Schools, properly so called; or she can continue the Teachers' Departments as heretofore, and apply, in addition to them, a portion of her vast resources to the maintenance of such schools.

In looking over the abstracts of the reports of the eight Academies, upon which the Teachers' Departments have been engrafted, as contained in the last annual report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, we were surprised to observe, that only one of the Academies reports a class of *Female*

pupils, as belonging to that Department, and that class consisted of only *nineteen*. It is barely possible, that there may be a class of females, preparing themselves to become teachers, in some other Academy, though the language of the abstracts almost necessarily excludes such a supposition. Is this by accident or design; or does it result from that arrangement of the academical terms, by which they are made to occupy the Spring, Summer and Autumn months, when females are usually employed in teaching, while the long vacation comes in the winter? However this may be, it would have more fully accorded with our own notions, both of immediate and ultimate benefit, to have seen the proportion of females to males reversed. That females are better fitted by nature than males to train and educate *young* children is a position, which the public mind is fast maturing into an axiom. With our economical habits in regard to all school expenditures, it is a material fact, that the services of females can be commanded for half the price usually paid to males. But what is of far higher moment is, that they are endowed by nature with a stronger affection for children; they have quicker sympathies, livelier sensibilities, and more vivid and enduring parental instincts. They are more free from coarse and vulgar practices, and their ears are unassailed by the voice of that political ambition, which constitutes the madness of our times. Among all the diversified employments of life, there is none higher, worthier, more dignified or more honorable, than that of an elevated female character, who is reproducing, in the hearts of children, her own exalted sentiments of truth and duty.

Independently, however, of the beneficent agency of females as teachers of the young, any course of policy seems to us fundamentally wrong, which neglects their education as members of the Republic. Civilization will advance just as far as the female character advances. It cannot rise above the point of elevation attained by that character; nor can it be kept below it. It is now twenty years, since a comprehensive and efficient scheme of Education was projected by the government of Prussia. That government is despotic, and it seems to be universally understood, that a paramount object and motive in that remarkable movement, was to instil into the minds of the people, the principles of subordination to the absoluteness of imperial authority. But encroachments upon prerogative were to be apprehended from men and not from women, and therefore men were to be trained and disciplined to obedience. The motive is legible in the plan for its fulfilment. If our memory is not at fault, there were in 1833 more than forty Normal Schools in that kingdom; all, or substantially all, for the qualification of *male* teachers. Teaching by females is used but to a very limited and insignificant extent. Although, therefore, the cultivation of the female mind may have really advanced, yet that of the other sex has been carried forward so much more rapidly, that female intelligence has relatively declined. The consequences of a plan, in this respect so preposterous, are now becoming manifest. Half of one generation has passed away and half of another has arisen to supply its place. Sufficient time has now elapsed to exhibit some of the results of the experiment, for, in the matter of education, spring-time and harvest are not reckoned by years, but by generations. We are informed, from sources deemed worthy of reliance, that the mental character of females, in point of attainment, of cultivation, of power, is falling below that of males. A moral separation is taking place between the sexes;—laying, as far as it extends, its cruel ban upon all the pleasures of social and spiritual companionship. This is rendered so much the more deplorable, if the inferiority is with the female, for society must ultimately come back to her position. It does not follow, because there is a local dwelling together, that there is any intellectual fellowship, or any of the enjoyments that spring from mental communion. Individuals who have learned the conventionalities of life at the same school, who have the same tailor and dress maker, who live in the same

street or in the same house, may be separated from each other by moral spaces, wider than the orbit of Saturn. Great diversity in tastes and capacities necessarily works estrangement among companions. Difference in external circumstances is nothing where minds are truly congenial; but an opposition in sentiments and predilections presents a breadth of chasm, over which strength cannot leap nor wing fly. A superior education of men, coëxisting and simultaneous with an inferior cultivation of women, is a moral compulsion constraining the sexes to turn their faces in opposite directions and leading them into regions of the spiritual universe, more and more remote from each other. Repugnant habits will be established; a contrariety in pleasures and pursuits, a higher and a lower grade of intellectual recreations and employments will divide society; or, if the same objects enforce themselves upon common attention, they will become sources of discord and not of harmony, from the conflicting tastes and feelings, with which they will be regarded. Under such a moral divorcement, the whole community would be made to resemble an immense Shaker establishment, in which, though the men and women should occupy the same households, they would approach all subjects of intellect and of morals through different avenues, and, spiritually speaking, would never be allowed to touch each other.

We do not mean to say that any such consequences are likely to ensue from the plan adopted in the great State, whose enlightened policy we are considering; but this train of reflection furnishes us with an opportunity to bear witness to the wisdom of the Massachusetts Board of Education, in appropriating their first Normal School exclusively to the qualification of Female Teachers. We believe it will be the first Normal School, properly so called, in the world, exclusively dedicated to the female sex. It recognizes, and indeed, is founded upon, the two great ideas,—the relative efficiency of the female sex in the ministry of civilization, and the value of female services in the education of the young. It remains to be seen, whether the period has been antedated, at which this philosophy can be reduced to practice.

But it is the liberality—we use the word in its fullest latitude—it is the bounteous liberality, with which the State of New York is fostering the interests of her Common Schools, which signalizes her educational policy and confers upon her the most honorable preëminence. What will be said by those citizens of Massachusetts, who, in the absence of worthy deeds done by themselves, are self-complacently boasting of the wisdom of their ancestors,—as though honor were a possession capable of entailment—what will they say, when told, that the State of New York, by a law passed in April last, in addition to an annual sum of *fifteen thousand* dollars, given to their colleges, and of *forty thousand* dollars, given to their academies, distributes annually to the Common Schools, the sum of *two hundred and seventy-five thousand* dollars! We write these sums out in words, instead of using the Arabic figures, lest some of our readers should think that a typographical error of one or more ciphers had been made by the printer. The several county authorities, as before explained, are required by law to levy a tax upon each town, equal to its distributive share of the State's appropriation. The towns are then authorized to raise by a town tax a third sum equal to both the former. And to the aggregate of these three sums is to be added the contributions of individuals, according to the number of the children they send to the school and the amount of their attendance. *Fifty-five thousand* dollars of the money received from the State, together with an equal sum raised in the towns, making in the whole *one hundred and ten thousand* dollars,—(we still use words instead of figures)—is to be specifically applied for the term of three years, to the purchase of libraries for the several district schools. A third of a million of money, to be expended for the seeds of knowledge and virtue, which are to be sown in that most prolific of all soils, the minds and hearts of the children!

In the space of three years, therefore, by force of existing laws, *six or seven hundred thousand* volumes will be distributed throughout the State;—more than one volume to every child between the ages of five and fifteen years, or *sixty or seventy* volumes, on an average, to every *fifty-five* children. This is one of the noblest enterprises of modern civilization. The authors and projectors of this plan, if it be wisely executed, will have freighted Time with blessings for posterity.

While, however, we say with Dr. Channing, "*God be thanked for books;*"—we would reverently add, *not without a good deal of discrimination.* Books are bad as well as good. Some books are written for conscience' sake, and some for the copy-right's sake. Some books have been written by lovers of truth, and others by those, who were more in love with their own opinion, than with truth. Books, which are to form the minds of children, should be selected even with more care than the food which is designed to nourish their bodies. Although much, therefore, has been done by the makers of the law, in enacting that libraries shall be provided for the children, yet a duty not less responsible, and far more difficult, remains to be performed by the administrators of the law in making the selection. We cannot doubt, however, that the wisdom which projected this noble measure will preside over its execution.

One provision in the school law of New York will undoubtedly strike the minds of the citizens of this State with surprise, unaccustomed as we are to confer upon any individual an uncontrollable or irresponsible power. By that law it is provided, that any person who considers himself aggrieved by any decision made by any district school meeting, or any decision in regard to the forming and altering, or refusing to form or alter any school district, or in regard to paying any teacher or refusing to pay him, or in refusing to admit any scholar gratuitously into any school on account of alleged inability to pay, or, in fine, concerning any matter, arising under the general school law, may appeal to the Superintendent of Common Schools, and his decision upon the case shall be final and conclusive. Thus, in regard to this subject, a power, unlimited and irresponsible, is vested in a single officer. Under this authority, probably not less than five hundred judicial decisions have been pronounced by the incumbents of that office, within the last dozen years, upon every variety of question, which could arise under a law, whose administration affects the interest and family of almost every man in the State. The reason of this wide departure from the customary course—a departure which seems at least non-republican, if not anti-republican—is undoubtedly to be found in the facilities it gives for the prompt and cheap settlement of all contested questions; thus anticipating the tardy processes of the courts, and quenching that fiery spirit of controversy, which is always kindled by a protracted litigation, especially where a public body constitutes one of the parties. Not less than four-fifths of these cases have been adjudicated, within the last six years, by the late Superintendent, Gen. John A. Dix, who has lately collected, and published, in a volume, the decisions pronounced by himself and by his immediate predecessor in office, in a manner similar to that in which the decisions of the courts of law are published. The legal opinions, given by Gen. Dix, together with the Reports, which, from year to year, he has made to the Legislature, evince a degree of industry, a knowledge of affairs, and—considering the recency of discussions upon education on this side of the Atlantic,—a profound and philosophical comprehension, in its depth and magnitude, of the subject committed to his charge, which are in the highest degree creditable to his judgment; while his Reports, thoroughly imbued with that all-embracing spirit of philanthropy, which includes the whole people in its plans for amelioration, are not less honorable to his feelings, as a citizen and a man. Under the recent political change in that State, he has failed of a reappointment to the office he had so ably filled; but though now retired from the station, the

effects of his past labors are neither annulled nor suspended;—he will remain connected with the system through the beneficent influences he has imparted; he will continue to act, through the impulses already given it. The Hon. John C. Spencer, for a long time one of the most eminent counsellors and lawyers in the State, has succeeded to this arduous and responsible station. His present power is an instrument, whereby he can cause a more enduring note to be added to the music of his fame; or, to speak without metaphor, he now has an opportunity to illustrate the great truth, so often lost sight of in our times, that the only value of an office consists in the means, which it affords for benefiting mankind, and the extent of that benefit is the exact measure of its honor.

Vast as are the interests of that mighty State,—with a population, approaching to that of the whole United Colonies, at the time they achieved their independence, and a valuation, probably exceeding that of the whole country during the Revolutionary struggle;—with a soil, fertile in vegetable and stored with mineral productions;—with a splendid system of internal improvements, yielding its millions of direct revenue to the State, yet, indirectly, a hundred fold more valuable to the citizens from the means which it furnishes for universal competence and comfort;—with an extent of territory, double that of the Netherlands, one quarter greater than the kingdom of Portugal, and almost equal to that of England; occupying a central and commanding position, by which it is open to the ocean on one side, and connected on all others with immense regions, filled with industrious and populous communities, so that a great part of the commerce of this Western world passes through its gates and pays it tribute;—yet in the midst of these vast and varied interests, its true interest—that of the education of its people—transcends them all. For to what purpose, is there a combination of all those constituents of greatness, which make it truly an Empire State;—of what avail is its territorial extent, measured, as it is, by degrees of latitude and longitude upon the earth's surface;—why are its great thoroughfares and cities piled and heaped high with accumulated riches;—to what end does every inflowing tide pour wealth upon its shores, —if, amidst all these elements of worldly power, the mind of man have not an over-mastering power, if the intellect and morals do not rise above them and predominate, and establish a supremacy over them, and convert them from gratifications of appetite and passion and pride, into instruments of mental and spiritual well-being? To devote worldly and material resources to intellectual and moral improvement; to change corporeal riches into mental treasures, is to transmute the dull, cold, perishable things of earth and time into celestial and immortal capacities;—as, by the mysterious processes of nature, the dark mould of the valley is turned into flowers and fruits. “EXCELSIOR” is the beautiful motto, which that great State has chosen. Let her wisely fulfil that noble idea, by striving, through the means of an enlarged and thorough education of her people, to rise *higher* and HIGHER in the endless scale of good.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

[From the Boston Daily Advertiser.]

“The Board of Education was established at the moment of need. Our Common Schools had rapidly deteriorated. The first proceeding of the Board has concentrated on these Schools that public attention and interest which were required and will be efficient for their reform.

“But this institution will effect its greatest good by assuring to the cause of Education in general, the guidance and services of men of high intelligence and accurate science.

“Education is eminently a science, and has been so held by men of edu-

cation, ever since the days of Aristotle and his royal pupil. On the subject of a science none but a scientific man can be practical; on the subject of an art it is otherwise—a stone-cutter may be practical without science, a geologist cannot be.

“The basis of Education is necessarily, metaphysics, or a knowledge of the faculties of the mind—the natural order of their development—their several modes of action and their natural relations;—this knowledge is as necessary for one who would direct Education as the knowledge of anatomy to an operating surgeon.

“Lately there prevailed on this subject, an empiricism, whose effects would have been lamentable had they been lasting; like other quackeries, it adapted itself to that popular passion which seeks to get very rich or very wise very quickly or very cheaply. Under it, the purposes of Education were misapprehended and its means were misapplied—knowledge was used like an Indian’s paint, to *smear the skin* only, and not as a natural aliment to be wrought by exercise into the mental system till the healthy nourishment and gradual development of every faculty to its full power had produced a mental Athlete. Mind itself was treated as if memory was its only power, and valued, like a beggar’s wallet, for the quantities of orts and ends that could be crammed into it. In all this, the means were mistaken for the ends, established principles of mental philosophy were contravened, and infant minds, whose imaginations (those wings on which the virtues mount) were just opening, were buried beneath the virile load of logic and philosophy. Books of science and histories were abridged for children, as if *condensation*, the last and highest achievement of a matured and trained intellect, adapted the principles of science and the philosophy of history to childish apprehension; or as if the vitality and benefit of either philosophy or history consisted in the barren technicalities and names and dates which merely taxed memory.

“A practical evil resulting from this, which parents have felt in their pockets, and children in their intellects—was the onerous multiplication and injurious variety of books that every year and every day poured upon the community, as if the principles of Education had never been fixed or the means of communicating elementary knowledge were not known or possessed, till the publication of *the last School Book*. If there is a cardinal rule in Education, it is that a child’s food should be *simple*—his books *few*, and his playthings both *simple* and *few*; then he will escape dyspepsia in body and mind.

“These errors and evils, which from the beginning ‘made the judicious grieve,’ resulted merely and directly from ignorance of the science of Education—they contravened natural laws, and their effect was the reverse of that of proper Education—they dwarfed the intellect and stunted the heart, and ensured *small men*.

“The removal of abuses is necessarily the first labor of the Board of Education, and of that Augean process the first effect is always to rouse the opposition and clamor of those, who are attached to the abuses, by pater-nity, interest or habit. That the Board of Education, therefore, should be attacked and squibbed at, and its purposes crossed, is the mere necessity of circumstances; the only wonder is that these acts of opposition should be so few, so confined in their source, and so merely personal in their motive.”

NOTE.—We take this opportunity to correct a misapprehension, into which some of our contemporaries have fallen in supposing that this *Journal* is either prepared, supervised or controlled by the Board of Education. The individual, whose name appears, as its Editor, on the paper itself, is alone responsible for its contents. We ardently hope to make the paper in every respect worthy the approval of the Board and promotive of the great cause in which they are engaged, but we deem it our duty to make this statement, that neither our omissions nor commissions may be imputed to them.—ED.

TOWN GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.

The establishment of town Grammar Schools has been sadly neglected in many towns in this Commonwealth. The number of towns that are by law required to support such schools, and are delinquent in their duty, was at the date of the first report to the Board of Education twenty-nine. It is gratifying to know that this number is diminishing.

The town of Taunton was last year indicted for neglecting to keep a town school. The penalty for this neglect is twice the largest sum ever appropriated by the town in any one year for the public schools. Taunton has petitioned the Legislature for such a modification of the law as would exempt it from this duty, but the committee to whom this petition was referred have reported against the modification.

Nantucket, has established a town school, and Lynn, last year, voted to do so.

Gloucester has for some years been without an institution of this kind, the more necessary there on account of the distance of the town from any Academy. At the town meeting on the fifth of March, instant, the subject was brought before the town in some plain, pertinent, and decided remarks, which we will copy from the annual report of the school committee.

"The School Committee of the Town of Gloucester, as by law directed, submit this, their Annual Report, to the Town.

"The Father of our Country, the immortal Washington, in that invaluable legacy of the wisdom gathered from his long and richly varied experience, his Farewell Address, enjoins upon the American people the care of popular education, as among the highest of duties, and essential to the well-being of a free community. We will quote his words:—

"It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of a popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?

"Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened."

"Your Committee felt the full force of this solemn injunction, and they entered upon the discharge of the duties which devolved upon them with the determination to spare no effort for the improvement of the schools of the town, and to derive from them the greatest possible advantages both to the minds and to the hearts of the rising generation. To this end they have labored assiduously, and they have great reason to rejoice at their success.

"Before proceeding to report upon the condition of the existing schools in the town, your Committee must be allowed to call the attention of the town to some requisitions of the laws of the Commonwealth at present disregarded here, to the serious loss and injury of the rising generation.

"By the fifth section of the Law of Public Instruction—

"Every town, containing five hundred families or householders, shall, besides the schools prescribed in the preceding section, maintain a school, to be kept by a master of competent ability and good morals, who shall, in addition to the branches of learning before mentioned, give instruction in the history of the United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry, algebra; and such last mentioned school shall be kept for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town, ten months at least, exclusive of vacations, in each year, and at such convenient place, or alternately at such places in the town, as the said inhabitants at their annual meeting shall determine, and in every town containing four thousand inhabitants, the said master shall, in addition to all the branches of instruction before required in this chapter, be com-

petent to instruct in the *Latin and Greek Languages, and general history, rhetoric and logic.*

"Your Committee would respectfully submit to the town whether it is consistent with the obligation of good citizens to obey the laws, with the respect which the town owes to its own character and reputation, with the regard which we ought to feel for the welfare of those who are to come after us, or even with the first principles of common honesty, any longer grossly to violate or cunningly to evade the wholesome provisions of the statute just quoted. To vote that every district school in the town shall be a town grammar school, without providing the means to make it such, is as much to the purpose as to vote that a calf shall be an elephant. The vote does not change the nature of the thing. Our district schools are not the town grammar schools described in the statute, though they are excellent and most admirable institutions in their place. To establish a real town grammar school in every district would cost vastly more than the town can afford to raise. But we ask every voter in this town whether it is becoming a town of nine thousand inhabitants to attempt to shield itself from the performance of a statute duty by a fraudulent entry on its records, by a vote registered there for the inspection of the whole world, that a thing is what it is not, that our district schools are common town grammar schools. Has not such a proceeding, when well considered, too much of the nature of a paltry evasion? Ought we not rather to come up to the mark manfully, and do our duty, under the law?

"The question whether the town be not really liable to twice the highest sum ever raised for the schools, by neglecting to provide for a town school, is a question of very little consequence compared with the manner in which the character of the town is implicated by any covert attempt to evade the law, or compared with the vital interests of our children left unprovided for.

"That all education beyond the mere rudiments of learning taught in the district schools, ought to be confined to the families of a few fortunate citizens who can afford to send their children out of town to school, is a proposition so aristocratical and justly odious that it would not be listened to for a moment; yet such is the practical consequence of the neglect on the part of the town to provide higher schools. Unless it is for the interest of this town that the great mass of the next generation should grow up in comparative ignorance, while the most arduous efforts are making in every part of the State to elevate and improve our common school education, this crying evil calls aloud for a remedy. The Committee conceive that they have done their duty in calling the attention of their fellow citizens to this subject. It now remains for the town to do theirs."

This report was read in an unusually full meeting, and after a full discussion of several of the topics touched upon, it was accepted without amendment by a vote of more than four fifths of the legal voters present.

It was moved by Mr. Rantoul—That it is expedient for the town forthwith to establish a grammar school according to law. This motion was adopted by a vote of more than four fifths of the meeting. A large Committee was then appointed, of which Mr Rantoul was named chairman, to report the best mode of carrying this vote into effect.

These proceedings are highly honorable to the citizens of Gloucester. If their Resolve is carried out with the spirit in which it is conceived, posterity will have reason to bless the enlightened policy which *now* actuates them. We congratulate the parents of that town upon the better prospect opening for their children, and we hope that their example will be followed wherever it is necessary that such an example should be held up for imitation.

"Sow the seeds of usefulness in the spring-time of life, and they *will* germinate, they *will* grow, and they *will* give the increase. Teach the young to provide for themselves, and you qualify them to be useful to others."—JUDGE BUEL.

MORAL DISCIPLINE.

We copy a portion of the chapter on "Moral Discipline," from "THE TEACHER," by the Rev. Jacob Abbott. Few, if any works, on Education, are so minute in details, so practical in character, and, therefore, so useful as a Manual for the school room, as Mr. Abbott's Teacher. It possesses one excellence in a higher degree than any other book on the subject, we have ever perused. While it vindicates the right of the Teacher to unlimited authority in his school, it proceeds, throughout, upon the plan of allurement, not coercion, of affection, not terror, as the means of securing a performance of duty. In ninety-nine cases in every hundred, nature has made hope a stronger motive than fear in the human mind;—and, in all cases, she has made the immediate pleasure of doing right greater than the immediate gratification of doing wrong, and Mr. Abbott has found out these truths, and has given advice to teachers and parents in harmony with them.

"I have thus far under this head, been endeavoring to show the importance of securing, by gentle measures, a majority of the scholars, to coöperate with the teacher in his plans. The methods of doing this, demand a little attention.

"(1.) The teacher should study human nature as it exhibits itself in the school room, by taking an interest in the sports and enjoyments of the pupils, and connecting, as much as possible, what is interesting and agreeable, with the pursuits of the school, so as to lead the scholars to like the place. An attachment to the institution and to the duties of it, will give the teacher a very strong hold upon the community of mind which exists there.

"(2.) Every thing which is unpleasant in the discipline of the school should be attended to, as far as possible, privately. Sometimes it is necessary to bring a case forward in public, for reproof or punishment, but this is seldom. In some schools, it is the custom to postpone cases of discipline till the close of the day, and then, just before the boys are dismissed at night, all the difficulties are settled. Thus, day after day, the impression which is last made upon their minds, is received from a season of suffering, and terror, and tears.

"Now such a practice may be attended with many advantages, but it seems to be, on the whole, unwise. Awaiting the pupils, by showing them the consequences of doing wrong, should be very seldom resorted to. It is far better to allure them, by showing them the pleasures of doing right. Doing right is pleasant to every body, and no persons are so easily convinced of this, or rather so easily led to see it, as children. Now the true policy is, to let them experience the pleasure of doing their duty, and they will easily be allured to it.

"In many cases, where a fault has been publicly committed, it seems, at first view, to be necessary that it should be publicly punished; but the end will, in most cases, be answered, if it is *noticed* publicly, so that the pupils may know that it received attention, and then the ultimate disposal of the case, may be made a private affair, between the teacher and the individual concerned. If, however, every case of disobedience, or idleness, or disorder, is brought out publicly before the school, so that all witness the teacher's displeasure, and feel the effects of it, (for to witness it, is to feel its most unpleasant effects,) the school becomes, in a short time, hardened to such scenes. Unpleasant associations become connected with the management of the school, and the scholars are prepared to do wrong with less reluctance, since the consequence is only a repetition of what they are obliged to see every day.

"Besides, if a boy does something wrong, and you severely reprove him in the presence of his class, you punish the class, almost as much as you do him. In fact, in many cases, you punish them more; for I believe it is

almost invariably more unpleasant for a good boy to stand by and listen to rebukes, than for a bad boy to take them. Keep these things, therefore, as much as possible, out of sight. Never bring forward cases of discipline, except on mature deliberation, and for a distinct and well-defined purpose.

"(3.) Never bring forward a case of discipline of this kind, unless you are sure that public opinion will go in your favor. If a case come up, in which the sympathy of the scholars is excited for the criminal, in such a way as to be against yourself, it will always do more harm than good. Now this, unless there is great caution, will often be the case. In fact, it is probable that a very large proportion of the punishments which are ordinarily inflicted in schools, only prepare the way for more offences.

"It is, however, possible to bring forward individual cases in such a way, as to produce a very strong moral effect of the right kind. This is to be done by seizing upon those peculiar emergencies, which will arise in the course of the administration of a school, and which each teacher must watch for, and discover himself. They cannot be pointed out. I may, however, give a clearer idea of what is meant by such emergencies, by an example. It is a case which actually occurred, as here narrated.

"In a school where nearly all the pupils were faithful and docile, there were one or two boys, who were determined to find amusement in those mischievous tricks, so common in schools and colleges. There was one boy in particular, who was the life and soul of all these plans. Devoid of principle, idle as a scholar, morose and sullen in his manners, he was, in every respect, a true specimen of the whole class of mischief-makers, wherever they are to be found. His mischief consisted, as usual, in such exploits as stopping up the keyhole, upsetting the teacher's inkstand, or fixing something to his desk to make a noise, and interrupt the school.

"It so happened, that there was a standing feud between the boys of his neighborhood, and those of another, situated a mile or two from it. By his malicious activity, he had stimulated this quarrel to a high pitch, and was very obnoxious to the boys of the other party. One day, when taking a walk, the teacher observed a number of boys with excited looks, and armed with sticks and stones, standing around a shoemaker's shop, to which his poor pupil had gone for refuge from them. They had got him completely within their power, and were going to wait until he should be wearied with his confinement, and come out, when they were going to inflict upon him the punishment they thought he deserved.

"The teacher interfered, and by the united influence of authority, management, and persuasion, succeeded in effecting a rescue. The boy would probably have preferred to owe his safety to any one else, than to the teacher, whom he had so often tried to tease; but he was glad to escape in any way. The teacher said nothing about the subject, and the boy soon supposed it was entirely forgotten.

"But it was not forgotten. The teacher knew perfectly well that the boy would, before long, be at his old tricks again, and was reserving this story as the means of turning the whole current of public opinion against such tricks should they again occur.

"One day he came to school, in the afternoon, and found the room filled with smoke; the doors and windows were all closed, though, as soon as he came in, some of the boys opened them. He knew by this circumstance, that it was roguery, not accident, which caused the smoke. He appeared not to notice it, however, said he was sorry it smoked, and asked the mischievous boy, for he was sure to be always near in such a case, to help him fix the fire. The boy supposed it was understood to be accidental, and perhaps secretly laughed at the dulness of his master.

"In the course of the afternoon, the teacher ascertained, by private inquiries, that his suspicions were correct, as to the author of the mischief.

At the close of the school, when the studies were ended, and the books laid away, he told the scholars that he wanted to tell them a story.

"He then, with a pleasant tone and manner, gave a very minute, and, to the boys, a very interesting narrative of his adventure, two or three weeks before, when he rescued this boy from his danger. He called him, however, simply *a boy*, without mentioning his name, or even hinting that he was a member of the school. No narrative could excite a stronger interest among an audience of school-boys, than such an one as this; and no act of kindness from a teacher, would make as vivid an impression, as interfering to rescue a trembling captive, from such a situation as the one this boy had been in.

"The scholars listened with profound interest and attention, and though the teacher said little about his share in the affair, and spoke of what he did, as if it were a matter of course, that he should thus befriend a boy in distress, an impression, very favorable to himself, must have been made. After he had finished his narrative, he said,

" 'Now should you like to know who this boy was?'

" 'Yes sir;' 'Yes sir;' said they, eagerly.

" 'It was a boy that you all know.'

" 'The boys looked around upon one another. Who could it be?'

" 'He is a member of this school.'

There was an expression of fixed, and eager, and increasing interest, on every face in the room.

" 'He is here now,' said the teacher, winding up the interest and curiosity of the scholars, by these words, to the highest pitch.

" 'But I cannot tell you his name; for what return do you think he made to me? To be sure it was no very great favor that I did him; I should have been unworthy the name of teacher, if I had not done it for him, or for any boy in my school. But at any rate, it showed my good wishes for him,—it showed that I was his friend, and what return do you think he made me for it? Why, to-day he spent his time between schools in filling the room with smoke, that he might torment his companions here, and give me trouble, and anxiety and suffering, when I should come. If I should tell you his name, the whole school would turn against him for his ingratitude.'

"The business ended here, and it put a stop, a final stop to all malicious tricks in the school. Now it is not very often that so fine an opportunity occurs, to kill, by a single blow, the disposition to do wilful, wanton injury, as this circumstance afforded; but the principle illustrated by it,—bringing forward individual cases of transgression, in a public manner, only for the sake of the general effect, and so arranging what is said and done as to produce the desired effect upon the public mind, in the highest degree, may very frequently be acted upon. Cases are continually occurring, and if the teacher will keep it constantly in mind, that when a particular case comes before the whole school, the object is an influence upon the whole, and not the punishment or reform of the guilty individual, he will insensibly so shape his measures, as to produce the desired result.

"(4.) There should be a great difference made between the *measures you take*, to prevent wrong, and the *feelings of displeasure* against wrong, when it is done. The former should be strict, authoritative, unbending; the latter should be mild and gentle. Your measures, if uniform and systematic, will never give offence, however powerfully you may restrain and control. It is the morose look, the harsh expression, the tone of irritation and fretfulness, which is so unpopular in school. The sins of childhood are by nine tenths of mankind enormously overrated, and perhaps none overrate them, more extravagantly, than teachers. We confound the trouble they give us, with their real moral turpitude, and measure the one by the other. Now if a fault prevails in school, one teacher will scold and fret himself about it, day after day, until his scholars are tired both of school and of him; and yet

he will *do* nothing effectual to remove it. Another will take efficient and decided measures, and yet say very little on the subject, and the whole evil will be removed, without suspending for a moment, the good humor, and pleasant feeling, which should prevail in school.

"The expression of your displeasure on account of any thing that is wrong, will seldom or never do any good. The scholars consider it scolding; it is scolding, and though it may, in many cases, contain many sound arguments and eloquent expostulations, it operates simply as a punishment. It is unpleasant to hear it. General instruction must indeed be given, but not general reproof.

"(5.) Feel that, in the management of the school, *you* are under obligation as well as the scholars, and let this feeling appear in all that you do. Your scholars wish you to dismiss school earlier than usual on some particular occasion, or to allow them an extra holiday. Show by the manner in which you consider and speak of the question, that your main inquiry is what is *your duty*. Speak often of your responsibility to your employers, not formally, but incidentally and naturally, as you will speak, if you feel this responsibility.

"It will assist very much too, in securing cheerful, good humored obedience to the regulations of the school, if you extend their authority over yourself. Not that the teacher is to have no liberty from which the scholars are debarred; this would be impossible. But the teacher should submit, himself, to every thing which he requires of his scholars, unless it is in cases where a different course is necessary.

"Suppose, for instance, a study card, like the one described in a preceding chapter, is made, so as to mark the time of recess and of study. The teacher, near the close of recess, is sitting with a group of his pupils around him, telling them some story. They are all interested, and they see he is interested. He looks at his watch, and shows by his manner, that he is desirous of finishing what he is saying, but that he knows that the striking of the bell will cut short his story. Perhaps he says not a word about it, but his pupils see that he is submitting to the control which is placed over them; and when the card goes up, and he stops instantly in the middle of his sentence, and rises with the rest, each one to go to his own place, to engage at once in their several duties, he teaches them a most important lesson, and in the most effectual way. Such a lesson of fidelity and obedience, and such an example of it, will have more influence, than a half hour's scolding about whispering without leave, or a dozen public punishments. At least so I find it, for I have tried both.

"Show then continually, that you see and enjoy the beauty of system and strict discipline, and that you submit to it yourself, as well as require it of others.

"(6.) Lead your pupils to see that they must share with you, the credit or the disgrace, which success or failure may bring. Lead them to feel this, not by telling them so, for there are very few things which can be impressed upon children by direct efforts to impress them; but by so speaking of the subject, from time to time, as to lead them to see that you understand it so.

"Repeat, with judicious caution, what is said of the school, both for and against it, and thus endeavor to interest the scholars in its public reputation. This feeling of interest in the institution may very easily be awakened. It sometimes springs up, spontaneously, and where it is not guided aright by the teacher, sometimes produces very bad effects upon the minds of the pupils, in rival institutions. When two schools are situated near each other, evil consequences will result from this feeling, unless the teacher manages it so as to deduce good consequences. I recollect, that, in my boyish days, there was a standing quarrel between the boys of a town school and an academy, which were in the same village. We were all ready, at any

time, when out of school, to fight for the honor of our respective institutions, but very few were ready to be diligent and faithful, when in it, though it would seem that that might have been rather a more effectual means of establishing the point. If the scholars are led to understand that the school is to a great extent their institution, that they must assist to sustain its character, and that they share the honor if any honor is acquired, a feeling will prevail in the school, which may be turned to a most useful account."

All governments ought to aspire to produce the highest happiness, by the least objectionable means. In a state of civilization, each individual voluntarily sacrifices a part of his liberty, to increase the general stock. But he sacrifices his liberty only to the laws; and it ought to be the care of good governments, that this sacrifice of the individual is repaid, with security and with interest.

NORMAL SCHOOL AT LEXINGTON.

The Board of Education hereby give notice, that a Normal School for the qualification of *Female Teachers* for Common Schools, is to be established at Lexington, in the County of Middlesex.

Applicants for admission to said School must have attained the age of sixteen years complete; they must be in the enjoyment of good health, and must declare it to be their intention to become school teachers after having finished a course of study at the *Normal School*; they must undergo a preparatory examination and prove themselves to be well versed in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic, and they must furnish satisfactory evidence of good intellectual capacity and of high moral character and principles.

No pupil will be admitted to the school for a less term than one year. Provision will be made for a longer course of study. A complete course will probably occupy three years.

Tuition will be free; but the pupils must supply their own board, provide themselves with all class books, and defray the incidental expenses of the school.

It is expected that the school will be opened in the course of the ensuing Spring. Due notice of the time will be previously given.

Applicants for admission may leave their names with the Rev. O. A. DODGE, of Lexington.

JARED SPARKS,	} <i>Visitors of the Normal School at Lexington.</i>
ROBERT RANTOUL, JR.	
GEORGE PUTNAM,	
HORACE MANN,	

Boston, Feb. 27, 1839.

In our next, we shall publish the laws of the State respecting schools, in order that all School Committee men (whom we hope we have for readers) may possess the means of becoming acquainted with their legal duties.

REMOVAL.

MARSH, CAPEN, LYON & WEBB give notice that they have removed to No. 109 Washington Street, *up stairs*.—M. C. L. & W. will supply Books and Stationery to Dealers and School Committees on the most liberal terms.

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